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Political debates and agricultural policies: discourse coalitions behind the creation of Brazil's Pronaf

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Abstract

The literature on rural development focuses on the socio-economic effects of agricultural support policies; the process of policy design, however, is devoted less attention. Identifying policy coalitions may help provide clarity on the motivations behind a given agricultural support system. Using Discourse Network Analysis, this paper studies the debates preceding the approval of the National Program for Strengthening Family Agriculture (Pronaf) in Brazil in the 90s. This represented a relevant overturn of the preceding policy framework. Two coalitions that opposed each other have been identified: while large farm business associations favoured measures to enhance productivity, movements comprising of family farmers aimed at introducing credit instruments for small producers. The strong pressure from social movements was key to the adoption of Pronaf. However, findings suggest that the Workers' Party, which found itself in a less conflicting position, played a brokerage role in the negotiation of the final policy package.

Keywords

Agricultural support; Policy-making; Discourse Network Analysis; Brazil; Pronaf.

Introduction

In the history of rural development, agricultural support policies have always served as key instruments in creating employment opportunities in rural areas and in expanding farm production, thus ensuring the sustainability of the sector. They have also played a crucial social role by alleviating poverty and compensating for the high risks associated with working in agriculture. The OECD (2018) defines agricultural support as 'the annual monetary value of gross transfers to agriculture from consumers and taxpayers arising from government policies that support agriculture, regardless of their objectives and economic impacts'. This broad concept encompasses a wide set of measures that can be grouped into two categories: producer support (direct payments, price support, foregone revenues, etc.), and general services aimed at creating conducive conditions for primary producers, such as institutions or infrastructures (Ibidem). Although private actors may also play a role, e.g. in the provision of risk management services, the agricultural sector relies heavily on public funding in both developed and emerging countries (see, e.g., the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union). For this reason, this paper focuses on the role of national institutions in designing agricultural support policies. The specific measures adopted by a country constitute its 'agricultural policy package', which may be shaped by several competing goals (OECD, 2017). The prevailing goals depend on which issues take leading positions in political debates, both internally and in the dialogue with international institutions.

The political dynamics behind the design of an ‘agricultural support package’ are particularly relevant in the case of Brazil. Agriculture has always been a fundamental sector for the Brazilian economy: in 2013, this country represented five percent of global agricultural production (the fourth largest share after China, the USA and India), and six percent of global agricultural exports (the third largest share after the USA and the Netherlands) (FAO, 2017). In the 90s, Brazilian agricultural support policies underwent impressive changes, with a corresponding impact on the evolution of the farming sector and on rural labour relations. The National System of Rural Credit (SNCR), created in 1965, served as a foundation for the modernization of Brazilian agriculture, allowing a transformation of its technical base, an increase in productivity, and the consolidation of agro-industrial complexes (Leite, 2001). Family farms – which in 1996 represented about 85 percent of the country’s production units, and which used 31 percent of its total farmland (Guanziroli et al., 2001) – were almost neglected, with resources flowing to middle- and large-scale producers from the Centre-South who focused mostly on export crops (Helfand, 2001; Leite and Wesz Jr, 2014). In 1995, the National Program for Strengthening Family Agriculture (Pronaf) was thus created, with the goal of providing credit and other types of support to family farmers¹ at favourable rates (Grisa, 2012; Petrini et al., 2016). Brazilian family farms exhibit both small sizes and strong links between the family and the farm in terms of labour input, income and management, in line with FAO’s (2014) definition of a family farm.

The reform of the SNCR and the approval of Pronaf was preceded by extensive debates among several actors (social movements representing family farmers, associations of agro-industrial businesses, policymakers, academics, international development institutions, etc.) and in diverse contexts (the Congress, mass media, universities, social mobilization in the streets, etc.). The conflicts between productivity increase and poverty reduction, farm businesses and peasants, export crops and products for internal consumption, along with the issue of ‘land struggle’, were at the core of these debates (Welch and Sauer, 2015). Due to its impact on Brazilian agriculture, the resulting agricultural support policy has been extensively analysed in the literature (Flexor and Grisa, 2016; Garcias and Kassouf, 2016; Gazolla and Schneider, 2013; Grisa et al., 2014; Leite, 2015; Resende and Martins Mafra, 2016). However, the political dynamics behind these significant changes to the norm have been studied much less. Identifying the actors involved and their positions on specific issues is fundamental in understanding the logic and motivations behind Pronaf.

This paper aims at assessing how political debates among key internal and external actors, in terms of their interrelations as well as their agreement or disagreement on important issues, contribute to the design of agricultural support policies. The approval of Pronaf was selected as a case study. The political-ideological linkages underlying the process of policy design, and their success or failure in influencing the final version of the programme, will be identified. Discourse Network Analysis will be used as a methodology to map such linkages. This approach allows for the analysis of political and other types of discourses in the form of networks. Through a codification of the statements of various stakeholders, networks of actors sharing the same views on a topic will be created. Despite the extensive research on Brazilian agricultural policies and Pronaf mentioned above, no study has quantitatively analysed the role of socio-political actors within the design process to date, especially in the English-language literature.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: The next section contains a review of the literature to detect relevant divisive issues concerning agricultural support policies. The third section outlines the main features of Pronaf and identifies the stakeholders involved in its design process. The fourth section

¹ Garner and de la O Campos (2014, p. 17) develop a uniform concept of family farming or, equivalently, family agriculture, as ‘a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, both women’s and men’s. The family and the farm are linked, coevolve and combine economic, environmental, reproductive, social and cultural functions’. This definition was adopted by FAO’s International Steering Committee for the International Year of Family Farming (FAO, 2014). The Brazilian law (article 3 of law 11,326 of July, 24th, 2006) speaks of ‘family farmer or rural familiar entrepreneur’, defined based on four simultaneous criteria: (1) possession, in any form, of no more than four ‘fiscal modules’ of land (a measure that varies from 5 to 110 hectares, depending on the region); (2) predominance of family labour; (3) minimum share (defined by the government) of family income obtained from family farm activities; (4) direct family management of the farm (Sanchez Peraci, 2011). Since this is an official definition in Brazil, we use it in the rest of this paper.

illustrates the methodology and the data collection process. Results are presented in the fifth section and discussed in the sixth section, with a final section reserved for the conclusion.

Literature review: agricultural support policies

‘Agricultural support packages’ need to be effective with respect to public goals, which vary depending on the country and the ruling party. These goals include ensuring food security, improving rural living standards, promoting sustainable production, building resilience, providing public goods, achieving inclusive development, etc. (OECD, 2017). Besides monetary support to producers, the provision of services – education and training, physical infrastructure, information and innovation sharing systems – is important in the achievement of these goals. Furthermore, support packages need to be coherent and well-integrated in national economic policies and international dynamics (Ibidem).

An important component of agricultural support packages is rural credit provision. Rural credit provision has always served as one of the main policies used to support agriculture in developing countries. Until the mid-60s, the international organizations behind agricultural policies, primarily the World Bank (WB), targeted mostly large-scale commercial farmers to interrupt the ‘vicious circle’ of low incomes, low savings and low productivity (Ellis, 1992, p. 155). Later, the focus shifted to small family farmers due to their higher efficiency and production potential, their lack of financing opportunities beyond local moneylenders, and the expected positive impact on rural poverty (Ibidem). The equity dimension has become even more relevant since the dawn of the 70s (Ibidem). Still, rural credit policies today are driven by diverse goals (increase productivity, fight rural poverty, etc.) and targets (such as specific crops or social groups), and rely on diverse institutions (state agricultural banks, commercial banks, multi-purpose agencies, etc.) and instruments (low interest rates, tax concessions, etc.). Based on a review of the literature on agricultural support policies, 19 divisive topics concerning the potential objectives, targets, instruments and institutions of support policies, and which are likely to be discussed by policymakers, have been identified. We refer to these topics as ‘divisive’ because the political struggle over agricultural policies is polarizing, and it is always difficult to arrive at a compromise between opposing positions (Paarlberg, 2013). These topics, summarized in Table 1, are used to classify the statements of the actors involved in the design of Pronaf.

The first group of topics concerns the goals of agricultural support. A first potential goal is to increase the incomes of people working in agriculture (both family farmers and hired workers). The actors supporting this statement argue that agricultural support should aim primarily at improving the living conditions of rural people. The second potential goal concerns agricultural productivity: its supporters argue that the increase of farm productivity should be the main goal of any agricultural policy, regardless of the destination of resources or the distribution of the resulting benefits. The third potential goal is to achieve technical innovation. Actors backing this goal assign a great deal of importance to the technological level of farms; hence, they aim primarily at stimulating the adoption of new technologies (machineries, high-yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizers, irrigation systems, etc.). Many authors argue that the ability of rural households to adopt innovation, including new products and techniques, increases if they have access to credit (De Souza Filho et al., 1999; Vicente and Vosti, 1995). The three goals mentioned above are usually intertwined; for example, higher per capita incomes increase saving rates and, thus, investments and productivity (Fuglie et al., 2012; Guyomard et al., 2004).

Table 1. List of divisive topics concerning agricultural support policies.

Topics	References
Goal 1: increasing farm incomes / rural salaries	Delgado, 2010; Guyomard et al., 2004
Goal 2: increasing productivity	Fuglie et al., 2012; Gasques et al., 2012; Pretty et al., 2010
Goal 3: stimulating technological innovation	De Souza Filho et al., 1999; Vicente and Vosti, 1995; Vieira Filho and de Silveira, 2012
Target 1: profit-oriented (vs. subsistence farmers)	Delgado, 2010; Diaz Osorio, 2007; Hazell et al., 2007
Target 2: family farmers (vs. juridical persons)	Delgado, 2010; Diaz Osorio, 2007; Grisa and Schneider, 2014; Hazell et al., 2007
Target 3: specific productions (vs. single farm payment)	Helfand, 2001; Helfand and de Rezende, 2004
Target 4: small farms (vs. large farms)	Castro, 2010; Helfand, 2001; Wolford, 2005
Target 5: export productions (vs. self-consumption goods)	Delgado, 2010; Grisa and Schneider, 2014; Helfand, 2001
Instrument 1: financial sustainability of the credit programme	Bittencourt et al., 2005; Grisa and Schneider, 2014; Kumar, 2005
Instrument 2: tax concessions for commercialization	Aksoy and Beghin, 2005; Schiff and Valdés, 1992
Instrument 3: fair access to land (property rights), even by means of expropriation	Dethier and Effenberger, 2012; Norder, 2014; Ondetti, 2016
Instrument 4: reduction of the power of informal financial intermediaries	Braverman and Guasch, 1986; Gagliardi, 2008
Instrument 5: monitoring for financing continuity	Gunes and Movassaghi, 2017; Westercamp et al., 2015
Instrument 6: linking farms and researchers (vs. customer approach)	Rivera and Sulaiman, 2009; Sumberg et al., 2012
Instrument 7: farmers' training	Evenson, 2001; Feder et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2004
Instrument 8: public subsidies (vs. private loans)	Delgado, 2012; Turvey, 2013
Institution 1: rural advisory services	Meyer, 2011; McMahon, 2012
Institution 2: producer cooperatives	Ellis, 1992; FAO, 2014; Markelova et al., 2009; Smith and Rothbaum, 2013
Institution 3: State agricultural banks	Turvey, 2013; Westercamp et al., 2015

The second group of topics concerns the targets of agricultural support. The first divisive issue focuses on whether policies should primarily target profit-oriented farmers who aim at maximizing their revenues, or subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers who strive to achieve decent life conditions. The second dilemma concerns whether funding and services should be provided primarily to family farmers (i.e., physical persons) or to juridical entities (e.g. corporations). This issue is particularly relevant in Brazil, as the concept of 'family farms', which replaced that of 'small producers', was at the core of the mobilizations which led to the approval of Pronaf (Welch and Sauer, 2015). The third divisive issue surrounds the supporters of funding aimed at specific crop or animal productions, and their opposition who favour the provision of generic loans and subsidies (such as the single farm payments of the EU Common Agricultural Policy). The fourth topic surrounds the advocates of small farmers, generally moved by equity concerns, and their opposition who opine that large producers deserve special attention

167 due to their role within the national economy (Helfand, 2001). The fifth topic concerns the destination
168 of crop and animal produce that benefited from policy interventions: on one side are actors who propose
169 that export produce (for Brazil: beef, chicken meat, soy, fruit juice, sugar, cotton, coffee, etc.) should be
170 given priority over produce intended for self-consumption or for local markets. This issue is particularly
171 relevant due to the role of Brazilian agriculture in international markets, which led former president
172 Luis Inácio Lula da Silva to promote national produce and free agricultural trade in supranational con-
173 texts. Many of these targets are closely related; indeed, due to the official definition adopted in Brazil,
174 family farms tend to be of small sizes, leading small producers to focus mostly on local markets rather
175 than on exports (Diaz Osorio, 2007; Hazell et al., 2007).

176 The third group of divisive topics concerns the instruments or strategies implemented to achieve
177 effective agricultural support. The first instrument concerns the financial sustainability of the policy
178 package. Stakeholders in support of this statement maintain that policies should be financially sustain-
179 able, meaning that the economic returns (e.g., taxation of resulting profits) should overcome or at least
180 equal the costs. Within this framework, non-repayable loans aimed at helping poor farmers bear their
181 costs, for example, are unlikely to be adopted. The second instrument deals with the manner of financing
182 producers. Actors backing this statement believe that tax concessions (e.g. on the products commercial-
183 ized) are preferable to subsidies or loans. According to the FAO (2001), compensation for high taxation
184 on agriculture enables farmers to be more competitive. The third instrument entails a radical approach:
185 ensuring fair access to land, even if by means of a land reform. In large countries where many farmers
186 fall under the poverty threshold, access to land is an actual issue. The assignment of property rights to
187 disadvantaged people is a driver of innovation adoption and, thus, of farm modernization (Dethier and
188 Effenberger, 2012). In Brazil, article 186 of the 1988 Constitution foresees the possibility of expropria-
189 tion for social interests and is, thus, at the core of the claims of social movements (Norder, 2014). The
190 fourth instrument addresses the power of private intermediaries who may adopt an ‘exploitative or mo-
191 nopolistic behaviour’ (Ellis, 1992, p. 155). Proponents of this statement aim to address corruption and
192 the inability of rural markets to avoid, for example, loan-sharking situations. The fifth instrument con-
193 cerns the evaluation of how resources are utilized by their recipients. Supporters of this option are of
194 the opinion that the continuity of credit and service provision should be bound to constant monitoring
195 or to positive before-after assessments. Braverman and Guasch (1986) point out that rural financial mar-
196 kets are unable to monitor the use of funds. It is for this reason, for example, that France, in 1956, created
197 the Centres of Rural Economy, which were responsible for monitoring the management of subsidized
198 loans (Westercamp et al., 2015). The sixth instrument concerns the idea of connecting public and private
199 researchers with farmers, as opposed to adopting a customer approach, as these connections may ensure
200 better focus on farmers’ priorities (Sumberg et al., 2012; FAO, 2014). A seventh instrument is agricul-
201 tural training and technical assistance. Its backers believe that formal education (provided, e.g., by rural
202 extension services), a fundamental component in any agricultural support package, must be assigned
203 importance. A last divisive issue with respect to instruments concerns the nature of producer support,
204 that is, whether public or private (market-based). Actors on one side prefer public subsidies, while those
205 on the other side suggest that loans should comply with market rules, so that profitability for the issuing
206 institution prevails over the welfare implications for their recipients. Although these eight propositions
207 are not exhaustive of all potential instruments, they cover a wide range of issues and do not necessarily
208 contradiction one another.

209 The fourth group of divisive topics deals with the institutions in charge of providing producer sup-
210 port and services. The first type of institution is represented by agricultural extension services, institu-
211 tions concerned with providing free goods (e.g., better-performing seeds) and services (e.g., training on
212 how to use new seed varieties). Actors in favour consider public extension services to be important in-
213 stitutions. A second type of institution is represented by cooperatives and farmer groups (either state-
214 sponsored or resulting from farmers’ initiatives), which ‘are often used as the ultimate lender to farmers’,
215 and may also become ‘viable local credit organizations in their own right’ (Ellis, 1992, p. 158). Actors
216 in support of this type of institutions believe that agricultural policies should stimulate cooperation
217 among producers and rely on the resulting organisations to be more effective. A third type of institution
218 is represented by state agricultural banks (as opposed to private credit institutions). Brazil opted very
219 early for a mixed banking system, leaving the states of the federation free to choose their preferred
220 system (Westercamp et al., 2015). Actors who support this third type of institution support the public

option. Broadly speaking, the debate on institutions is based on two clashing ‘schools of thought’: the supporters of public intervention, who deem it necessary to attract urban capital, and the advocates of minimalist regulation, who have dominated during the past decades (Turvey et al., 2013, p. 210).

The Brazilian case study

From the SNCR to Pronaf: a brief context²

Brazil is ‘a relatively industrialized middle-income country that maintains a significant family farm sector oriented to the domestic market, while also playing a key role in the global agri-food sector as a dominant agricultural exporter’ (Graeub et al. 2016, pp. 1-2). This strong dualism (reflected in agricultural support policies), coupled with the fact that agriculture continues to play a fundamental economic, commercial and social role (FAO, 2017), justifies the choice of this country as a case study. The federal government of Brazil has also implemented various public policies over the years. These include macroeconomic (fiscal, monetary, trade and exchange rate policies), sectorial (rural credit, technical assistance, price and market policies, etc.), as well as intersectoral interventions (economic, infrastructural, labour, environmental, social, territorial planning, etc.) (Delgado, 2001; Delgado, 2012; Favareto, 2007; Heredia et al., 2010).

The SNCR was created by law 4829 of November 5th, 1965 to support agricultural investments (from the purchase of farm equipment to the building of infrastructures), cover the costs of production and commercialization of farm output and increase productivity, among other goals. The SNCR represented the foundation for the modernization of Brazilian agriculture. Indeed, it allowed for a successful transformation of the technical assets of the farms, an increase in agricultural productivity, the consolidation of agro-industrial complexes, as well as the integration of agricultural capital in financial networks (Leite, 2001). However, prior to the mid-90s, the SNCR had mostly favoured medium and large-scale farms in Central and Southern Brazil that produce coffee, soy, sugar cane, oranges and cotton, and that are mostly export-oriented (Gonçalves Neto, 1997; Graziano da Silva, 2003; Helfand, 2001). A large share of farms, accounting for about 70 percent of the total, did not have access to credit (Bianchini, 2015, p. 16) and, therefore, could not enjoy the benefits associated with the SNCR. These consisted mostly of family farms.

Family farming is a system historically present in the Brazilian countryside³. Although often invisible in analyses dating to the colonial and imperial periods, which focused on large property and their production for foreign markets, small farmers were present in all regions of Brazil (Delgado, 2004). Based on data from 1960, Queiroz (2009, p. 61) points out that ‘Brazil, contrary to what is commonly said, is not a predominantly monoculture country, but a country of polycultures; small polyculture farms provide food to the sixty million inhabitants of Brazil and employ the majority of the rural workforce’.

However, the family farming sector of Brazilian agriculture was hit particularly severely by the advent of modernization, which fostered land and income concentration, rural outmigration, environmental problems, etc. (Graziano da Silva, 2003; Teixeira, 2005). Family farms became even more vulnerable in the economic context of the 80s, characterized by deep crisis, stagnation, indebtedness and inflation, and of the 90s, during which the Brazilian economy underwent economic liberalizations, regional integration and privatizations (Bianchini, 2015; Grisa, 2012).

The political liberalization that followed the end of the military dictatorship in the 80s allowed for the rebirth of civil society organizations such as trade unions and social movements inspired by landless people, rural workers and family farmers. In this context, the agrarian reform, along with the expansion of the Landless Workers’ Movement (MST), gained a lot of visibility, resulting in the formulation of a National Plan for Agrarian Reform (PNRA) by the government in 1985. In addition, the

² To further this debate, see Bianchini (2015), Grisa (2012), Mattei (2010), Moruzzi Marques (2004), Piccolotto (2011), and Santos (2011).

³ In Brazil, the concept of ‘family farming’, both as a productive system and as a socio-political entity, was defined in the 90s by social movements, academics, and politicians who contributed to the design of state policies and norms, thus gradually replacing the categories of ‘smallholders’, ‘subsistence farmers’, ‘low-income producers’, etc. (Guanziroli et al., 2012; Piccolotto, 2011; Medeiros, 2001; Schneider, 2006).

National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) began drawing up a proposal for a differentiated agricultural policy for small producers in 1986. During this same period, the Workers' Unified Centre (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores*, CUT) also had among its guidelines an agricultural policy focused on the interests of small producers and workers (Picolotto, 2011). These social movements played a very important role in the recognition of the sector and its demands.

To support small producers, the government of Itamar Franco (1992-1995) created, in 1994, the Program for Valorising Small Agricultural Production (*Programa de Valorização da pequena Produção Rural*, Provap), which relied almost exclusively on resources from the National Development Bank (BNDS). The federal government tried to encourage the activities of small farmers, and this had a significant impact on food production (Schultz and Ahlert, 2016). Thus, Provap was followed by Pronaf, and by the Program for the Generation of Employment and Rural Income (Proger Rural), which also depended on BNDS funding sources and other public funds (Schneider et al., 2004). By recognizing the peculiarities of family farms, the new norms provided credit and services to this socioeconomic group at favourable rates, in a manner different from the SNCR (Grisa, 2012). This represented the first national-level policy that specifically targeted the needs of family farmers (Schneider et al., 2004).

Since its approval, Pronaf has experienced several modifications. Besides the regular changes brought about by the yearly Family Farm Harvest Plan (*Plano Safra da Agricultura Familiar*), which defines adjustments in credit lines, financing conditions and volumes of available resources, Pronaf has undergone three major phases. The first phase spanned from its creation to the end of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government in 2002. It represented a period of operationalization of the programme by improving credit facilities, regulating access conditions, as well as mandating rural finance institutions to reach out to those historically excluded from agricultural policies (Abramovay and Veiga, 1999; Copetti, 2008; Mattei, 2006; Schneider et al., 2004).

The second phase of Pronaf spanned between president Lula's first term and president Dilma Rousseff's first term (2003-2014). It was characterized by a boosting of the resources endowed, an enlargement of the geographical focus to cover the entire federation, more flexibility of financial rules (interest rates reduction, deferment of payments, increase of the resources thresholds per contract, etc.), enlargement and diversification of the beneficiaries (by gender, age, and activity), simplification of access conditions, and a revision and diversification of the funding system (De Souza et al., 2013; Mattei, 2012; Gazolla and Schneider, 2013; Grisa et al., 2014; Capellesso et al., 2018).

The third phase began with Rousseff's second term as president, was consolidated during her impeachment, and continues to date. Data provided by the Central Bank of Brazil (2018) showed that between 2014 and 2017, Pronaf was affected by a reduction in the volume of funds, a decrease in the number of contracts, and a decrease in the value of subsidies paid by the government to stabilize the interest rates. The most recent data on rural credit indicates concentration and exclusion in Brazilian agriculture (Bianchini, 2018). However, these processes are much broader than specific changes in Pronaf: they represent an overturn in public policy and in the institutional framework of family farming, as many programs have been blocked, reformulated, or placed under review. The marginalisation of family agriculture in the nation's political and institutional scene became clear with the abolition of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and other agencies linked to rural development, which represented the main basis of legitimacy and support for sectorial policies (Niederle et al., 2017).

The transformations that took place during these three phases also led to changes in the political coalitions supporting specific policies. However, within this paper, we focus only on the initial period of policy design.

Actors involved in the design process of Pronaf

The design of Pronaf involved various different actors (Bianchini, 2015; Grisa, 2014; Moruzzi Marques, 2004; Picolotto, 2011; Santos, 2011; Schneider et al., 2004). These actors can be grouped into three categories: civil society organisations, political actors, and international multilateral organisations. The list of actors whose statements were analysed for this paper are reported in Table 2.

Civil society organisations include two main interest groups: 'on the one hand, the institutions representing large landlords and agricultural capital; on the other hand, the institutions which supported the adoption of *ad hoc* policies for small farmers, the consolidation of the agrarian reform, the expansion

of the rights of rural workers, and a more sustainable agricultural model' (Bianchini, 2015, p. 19). Among the former were the Confederation of Farming and Breeding of Brazil (CNA), the Brazilian Association of Agribusiness (ABAG), the Brazilian Rural Society (SRB) and the Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB). These organizations were able to influence Brazilian politics because of their high level of institutionalization, the presence of a political leader within their structures (Zani and da Costa, 2014), and the alliance they had built with urban entrepreneurs and politicians (Paulino, 2014). The organizations supporting family farmers included CONTAG, as well as recently founded groups such as the MST and the National Department of Rural Workers of the Workers' Unified Centre (DNTR/CUT). Despite programme divergences (Grisa, 2012; Picolotto, 2011), these groups amalgamated with organizations of fishermen, natives, rubber trappers, and other groups damaged by national agricultural policies, to organize the first Brazilian Land's Cry (*I Grito da Terra Brasil*), which took place in the capital in May 1994. These groups put in a series of claims that focused on the need for an *ad hoc* credit policy for small farmers (Grito da Terra Brasil, 1994). In 1995, a second Cry was organized⁴. These mobilizations were at the core of the creation of Pronaf, as they forced the Ministry of Agriculture and the Bank of Brazil to negotiate with the organizations representing family farmers (Vasconcellos and Vasconcellos, 2012) and implement a course of action favoured by them (Wesz Jr., 2010).

The so-called political actors consisted of individuals in state institutions. These actors represented different interests (their social basis, their political party, their territory, etc.) and were subject to contrasting pressures (interest groups, desire to achieve re-election, etc.). Between 1995 and 1998, eight main parties were represented in the Brazilian Congress (Chamber of Deputies and Senate): the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), the Liberal Front Party (PFL), the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), the Progressive Party (PP) – which became the Brazilian Progressive Party (PPB) after a number of splits –, the Brazilian Labour Party (PTB), the Workers' Party (PT), and the Democratic Labour Party (PDT). In addition to these parties, we will also consider the smaller National Reconstruction Party (PRN) (Braga and Bourdoukan 2010). Only the PT and the PDT opposed the government of Cardoso (PSDB), while a coalition of the other six parties 'provided the executive with a parliamentary support close to 75 percent of the seats' (Couto and Abrucio, 2003, p. 276). In Brazil there is no 'agrarian party': the interests of large landlords and agricultural entrepreneurs are advocated by the Parliamentary Front for Agriculture (the so-called '*Bancada Ruralista*'⁵), which played a core role in the debate on Pronaf (Barcelos and Berriel, 2009; Vigna, 2007). The *Bancada Ruralista* includes congressmen from many centre-right parties and is one of the most powerful interest groups in the Brazilian Congress (Ibidem). On the other hand, the interests of peasant movements and rural trade unions were advocated by centre-left congressmen from different parties, but in a less organized manner (Mendes Pereira, 2007).

As for international organizations, the most influential during the elaboration of Pronaf were the World Bank (WB) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (Flexor and Grisa, 2014). The former, known for its support of free-market policies (Wade, 2010), carried out some studies in collaboration with Brazilian researchers, the findings of which were summarized within reports (World Bank, 1994a; 1994b) and divulged to the public in workshops and other events. These reports recognized the predominance of small and medium-sized family farms and their importance for job creation and agro-food production. Furthermore, they diagnosed that these farms had been penalized by the SNCR. Nevertheless, they recommended a reduction of public intervention in agriculture, with a view to stimulate a 'market-oriented' approach within this sector (Vigna, 2001; 2007). Simultaneously, the FAO – in cooperation with the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), and with the support of Brazilian researchers – worked on the elaboration of an operational definition of family farming, while stressing the socio-economic role of this sector for Brazil. FAO's definition was then used to design public policy measures targeted at this group (Guanziroli, 1995).

The above-mentioned categories of actors shared strong linkages and never operated as totally separate groups. For example, the pressure of civil society organizations on their political representatives

⁴ The I and II Brazilian Land's Cry are a wide range of mobilizations carried out by social movements throughout the country: State Governments and the Federal Government negotiated a series of guidelines with these movements, mainly regarding rural policies (Picolotto, 2011). Such mobilizations continued in later years.

⁵ To know more about the *Bancada Ruralista* in Brazil, see Simionatto and Rodrigues Costa (2012).

(deputies and senators) allowed the former to have their interests recognized in the decisional arena. Some leaders of these organizations were elected to Congress and could thus work as part of the group of political actors. Another example is represented by multilateral organizations, whose reports were often mentioned by politicians or cited in advertising messages prepared by civil society organizations. As already mentioned, FAO's recommendations were elaborated courtesy of the support of public servants, researchers, trade unionists, and civil society leaders.

Table 2. Actors involved in the design process of Pronaf, whose statements were analysed.

Acronym	English name	Original name	Category	Coalition
ABAG	Brazilian Association of Agribusiness	<i>Associação Brasileira do Agronegócio</i>	civil society organisation	productivity-focused group
CNA	Confederation of Farming and Breeding of Brazil	<i>Confederação da Agricultura e Pecuária do Brasil</i>	civil society organisation	productivity-focused group
CONTAG	National Confederation of Agricultural Workers	<i>Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura</i>	civil society organisation	welfare-focused group
DNTR/CUT	National Department of Rural Workers of the Workers' Unified Centre	<i>Departamento Nacional dos Trabalhadores Rurais/Central Única dos Trabalhadores</i>	civil society organisation	welfare-focused group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations		international organisation	
MST	Landless Workers' Movement	<i>Movimento Sem Terra</i>	civil society organisation	welfare-focused group
PDT	Democratic Labour Party	<i>Partido Democrático Trabalhista</i>	political party	
PFL	Liberal Front Party	<i>Partido da Frente Liberal</i>	political party	
PMDB	Brazilian Democratic Movement Party	<i>Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro</i>	political party	
PP	Progressive Party	<i>Partido Progressista</i>	political party	
PPB	Brazilian Progressive Party	<i>Partido Progressista Brasileiro</i>	political party	
PRN	National Reconstruction Party	<i>Partido da Reconstrução Nacional</i>	political party	
PT	Workers' Party	<i>Partido dos Trabalhadores</i>	political party	
PTB	Brazilian Labour Party	<i>Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro</i>	political party	
SRB	Brazilian Rural Society	<i>Sociedade Rural Brasileira</i>	civil society organisation	productivity-focused group
WB	World Bank		international organisation	

Methodology and data

Discourse Network Analysis

Political discourses are often neglected in the explanation of political processes (Schmidt and Radaelli, 2004), despite their role in shaping the actions of political actors (Schmidt, 2008). The presence of groups of actors of equal social standing affects political processes because each group tries to impose its perspective on the others (Hajer, 1993). This is pointed out within the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993), which states that policymaking is an ongoing process, and that political groups with similar interests and beliefs collaborate with each other to reach their goals. Shared beliefs are the basis for coalition formation among actors involved in the political arena (Fischer et al., 2017; Sabatier and Weible 2007).

To influence political processes, group members must show strong ideational congruence among themselves and dominate the discursive space, and their political practices must reflect this discursive dominance (Leifeld and Haunss, 2012). This is particularly true in the case of continuously discussed political conflicts, during which coalitions constantly realign their stances in order to prevail over others: coalition members must share the same point of view and be consistent, in terms of common arguments, if they want to become dominant.

Discourse Network Analysis (DNA) is a methodology developed by Leifeld (2009) to measure and visualize policy discourses. It uses tools derived from Social Network Analysis (SNA) to map the relationships within a group of actors and analyse the characteristics of their network. By identifying the main arguments discussed and assigning them to each actor, the methodology allows for the measurement of similarities among the latter, thus identifying discourse coalitions as well as sub-coalitions within a discourse coalition. Actors are not classified into separate categories but may be connected through various paths. DNA has been used to analyse political or media discourses on environmental (Brugger, 2016; Fisher et al., 2013) as well as economic themes (Leifeld, 2013; Leifeld and Haunss, 2012). To our knowledge, this is the first attempt of using it to assess issues related to agricultural policy.

For any debate studied, the statements of each actor are coded by considering three variables: the organization of membership, the issue addressed, and the position taken (in favour or against). Such a process results in the creation of an actor-by-issue matrix. This matrix is subsequently converted into a square actor-by-actor matrix (a so-called co-occurrence matrix), where each cell represents the number of shared issue stances between pairs of actors (Fischer et al., 2013). Using this matrix, five types of discourse networks can be generated: affiliation, actor congruence, conflict, concept-congruence, and dynamic discourse networks (Leifeld and Haunss, 2012).

For our research, we first computed two ‘actor congruence networks’: one displaying the number of statements agreed upon by each pair of actors, and the other indicating the number of statements on which each pair of actors disagreed. In both networks, the strength of a tie (edge weight) between two actors depended on the number of common (positive or negative) statements. From these two networks, it was then possible to draw up the ‘conflict network’ (Leifeld and Haunss, 2012). The ‘conflict network’ indicates the number of statements on which each pair of actors had discordant opinions. Within a ‘conflict network’, the thickness of the edge weights is computed by summing up the number of discordances between actors on the same statements.

Once the above-mentioned networks have been created, network statistics are used to detect the actors who are most influential based on the nature of their relations (the congruence of their political views with other stakeholders’ political views). Network statistics give a quantitative measure of the power of each actor and an interpretation of his or her centrality. We used ‘betweenness centrality’ to detect actor relevance. This indicator considers the whole network when computing individual scores and identifies where actors are placed within the network. It is computed using the following formula:

$$BC_k = \sum_{i \neq j \neq k} \frac{\sigma_{ikj}}{\sigma_{ij}}$$

where σ_{ikj} is the number of geodesics linking actors i and j through k , and σ_{ij} is the total number of geodesics linking actors i and j (Prell, 2012). This measure identifies within the network the actors who are more strategic due to their brokerage position (based on their political stance). Given that we are interested in analysing the political discourse framework that emerged during the discussion of Brazil’s Pronaf, ‘betweenness centrality’ allows us to identify actors in less conflicting positions: a low level of ‘betweenness centrality’ indicates that an actor was less involved in the conflict, and vice versa.

Data collection and coding procedure

The dataset for the analysis was created using the following procedure. First, we selected relevant documents from which we could extrapolate actor statements on every issue. Four types of documents were considered: public declarations, original reports, parliamentary speeches, and newspaper articles, all dating back to the three-year period of 1994–1996. Despite the fact that political documents involve a high likelihood of exaggeration of ideological political perspectives, we assumed that every statement issued by an organization, or by one of its members, was illustrative of the political position of said organization, and that an analysis of its policy beliefs would explain the courses of action taken by the legislator (Fischer et al., 2013; Sabatier and Weible 2007).

Overall, we analysed 123 documents containing 222 statements. With regard to international organizations, the reports considered were independently published by the FAO or the WB (Guanziroli, 1995;

World Bank, 1994a; 1994b). These reports highlighted the need for Brazilian institutions to correct market failures and strengthen family farming. Trade unions and social movements also produced many documents and reports on agricultural support policies. To assess their role in the process of negotiation of Pronaf, we analysed their official public declarations, institutional reports, and newspaper articles. Finally, to identify the orientation of political parties, we analysed the speeches delivered in the Brazilian Senate during the plenary sessions of the three-year period, 1994-1996. Among the senators whose speeches were analysed, at least two (Jonas Pinheiro and Júlio Campos) belonged to the *Bancada Ruralista*. We decided not to consider the debates that took place in the Chamber of Deputies because, being mainly concerned with local issues, they did not help to reveal the positions of the parties on general agricultural support policies. Due to the large number of declarations available, the search terms 'Pronaf' and 'agricultural policy' (in Portuguese and English) were used to identify speeches of potential interest within the database of the Senate (Brazil, Federal Senate, 2017).

Table 3. Heatmap: positive statements (green), negative statements (red), and lack of opinion (white).

Statement	MST	CNA	ABAG	SRB	WB	CUT	CONTAG	PP	PFL	FAO	PTB	PMDB	PRN	PDT	PPB	PT
Goal 1: increasing farm incomes																
Goal 2: increasing productivity																
Goal 3: stimulating technical innovation																
Target 1: profit-oriented farmers																
Target 2: family farmers																
Target 3: specific productions																
Target 4: small farmers																
Target 5: export productions																
Instrument 1: financial sustainability																
Instrument 2: tax concessions																
Instrument 3: fair access to land																
Instrument 4: reduce the power of intermediaries																
Instrument 5: monitoring																
Instrument 6: linking farms to research																
Instrument 7: farmers' training																
Instrument 8: public subsidies																
Institution 1: rural advisory services																
Institution 2: producer cooperatives																
Institution 3: State agricultural banks																
Total	17	16	16	16	9	17	17	15	13	14	10	14	8	8	8	12

We conducted the coding process manually, based on the list of divisive topics identified above. For each of the 19 topics, we registered whether an actor had shown agreement, disagreement, or a lack of an opinion on it. Overall, 26 physical or juridical persons, belonging to 16 different organizations (our actors proper) were considered. We assumed the opinions expressed by all senators to be representative of the positions of their parties. No contradictions were observed amongst the opinions of different senators belonging to the same party, allowing for a straightforward aggregation of their opinions⁶. We did not assign specific weights to the stakeholders – despite the plausible assumption that

⁶ Some examples of the coding procedure are illustrated below.

- a) Actor *alfa* (PP): 'Então, do meu ponto de vista, se o Governo não quer ou não pode subsidiar a Agricultura, deve, pelo menos, adotar uma política coerente com essa impossibilidade, que é não permitir que produtos produzidos nessas regiões do mundo mais fortes economicamente, que subsidiam a produção e a exportação de produtos agrícolas, não ingressem em nosso País sem as alíquotas de proteção ao produto nacional. Proteger

some political actors are more important than others in the legislative process, and that their importance varies with the number of seats – because we focused solely on the debates preceding the implementation of Pronaf, during which all actors had equal opportunities to express their views. The outcome of the coding procedure is illustrated in Table 3. This outcome was analysed using the DNA software (Leifeld, 2010) and Ucinet (Borgatti et al., 2002).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the results

To begin, we identified the actors who managed to prevail, i.e. to contribute more to the policy outcome by avoiding conflicts. Table 4 reports the percentage of actors who mentioned each of the topics identified, and specifies whether their statements were in favour or against. Three important insights can be deduced from the table. First, economic goals, such as raising farm incomes, productivity and profits, were always mentioned, while topics related to socio-political aims, such as reducing the level of corruption, providing training, developing advisory services, and monitoring the way money was used, played a minor role. Second, despite being mentioned by many, the topics linked to general financial issues, such as focusing on export production (target 5) or achieving financial sustainability (instrument 1) were supported only by a few stakeholders. In particular, only eight percent of those who mentioned the financial sustainability of the policy, and 27 percent of those who mentioned support for export productions, were in favour. These issues are usually pursued by large farm businesses, who are interested in market-based financing and are oriented towards external markets. Third, the most divisive topics were the support for specific productions (target 3), the adoption of measures to ensure fair access to land (instrument 3), and the creation of state agricultural banks (institution 3), suggesting that the role of the government was a key matter of debate.

Table 4. Percentage of actors that mentioned each topic, and percentage who agreed or disagreed.

Statement	Mentioning (%)	Agreeing (%)	Disagreeing (%)
Goal 1: increasing farm incomes/salaries	100	100	0
Goal 2: increasing productivity	100	100	0
Goal 3: stimulating technological innovation	94	93	7
Target 1: profit-oriented farmers	100	94	6
Target 2: family farmers	88	79	21
Target 3: specific productions	56	56	44
Target 4: small farmers	81	77	23
Target 5: export productions	94	27	73
Instrument 1: financial sustainability	75	8	92
Instrument 2: tax concessions	69	73	27
Instrument 3: fair access to land	56	56	44
Instrument 4: reduce power of informal intermediaries	0	NA	NA
Instrument 5: monitoring	13	100	0
Instrument 6: linking farms and researchers	69	100	0
Instrument 7: farmers' training	31	100	0

o produto nacional é proteger exatamente o emprego e o produtor rural brasileiro. É uma política coerente: se quiser subsidiar, será melhor; se não puder, que o ingresso de produtos subsidiados não seja permitido’;

- b) Actor *beta* (PMDB): ‘E o nosso País, ao adotar a postura de abertura de seus mercados, que se impõe a cada passo, ficará, cada vez mais, inviabilizado em termos de sua produção agrícola. É preciso, portanto, uma política mais pragmática nessa matéria ou, melhor dizendo, a adoção de uma verdadeira política agrícola para o País. Uma política que leve em conta as diferenças regionais, por exemplo, porque, se neste momento os agricultores do Sul/Sudeste e Centro-Oeste do País se encontram nessas dificuldades, imaginemos os agricultores do semi-árido nordestino’.

The first statement, pronounced by a senator of the PP (called ‘Actor *alfa*’), reveals a preference for a protectionist strategy, in contrast with target 5. For this reason, within our actor-by-statement matrix, a negative score was associated to this issue (target 5) for the PP. The second speech comes from a senator of the PMDB (called ‘Actor *beta*’), who highlights the differences between small farmers from the North-East and large farmers from the South, thus asking for a policy differentiation. Hence, the PMDB got a positive score for Target 4.

Instrument 8: public subsidies	94	73	27
Institution 1: rural advisory services	38	100	0
Institution 2: producer cooperatives	69	100	0
Institution 3: State agricultural banks	81	69	31

Figure 1 presents the ‘conflict network’⁷. The presence of a large number of linkages is consistent with the remark of Leifeld and Haunss (2012) that strong polarisations are not generally found in policy networks. Nevertheless, the stakeholders are grouped into two distinct coalitions: one includes the SRB, ABAG and the CNA, and the other includes the MST, CUT and CONTAG. This reflects the historical polarization of the Brazilian rural system and its representative organizations. The presence of some thick lines despite the usual low polarisation indicates that some conflicts were quite intense. Indeed, the rural conflict has a significant socio-political relevance in Brazil: agricultural support policies have been used by the government to create consensus on several occasions, and so are a matter of intense debates within the political arena (Garcias and Kassouf, 2016).

The group that includes the SRB, ABAG and the CNA (hereafter, the ‘productivity-focused group’), which was more in line with the WB’s desiderata, supported market-oriented reforms, while the group that includes the MST, CUT, and CONTAG (hereafter, the ‘welfare-focused group’) was more consistent with the FAO’s beliefs (see Table 2). In the beginning of the 90s, the SRB, ABAG and the CNA worked together through the Front of Brazilian Agriculture (*Frente Ampla da Agropecuária Brasileira*, FAAB) to establish a relationship with the federal government in order to obtain political concessions for the actors they represented (Sauer, 2008). The conflict between the two groups stems from socio-economic cleavages: the former group defended the interests of business farming, while the latter represented the interests of small producers. Santos (2011, p. 123) refers to the presence of ‘two coalitions in dispute’ (*duas coalizões em disputa*) on agricultural policies⁸. While the MST, CUT and CONTAG, along with other actors involved in the Brazilian Land’s Cry, were on the frontline in requesting specific channels of support for family farms, the SRB, ABAG and the CNA supported the expansion of SNCR without any exclusive policy for family farms.

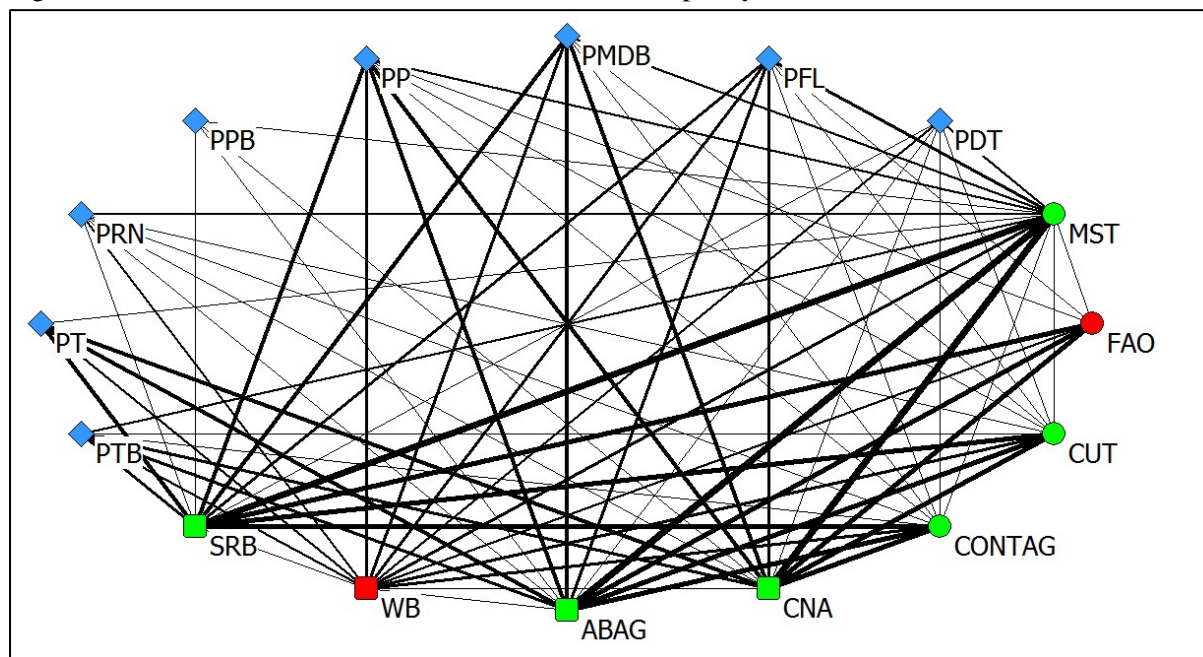
The official documents on small producers and family farmers elaborated by the CNA present these groups – implicitly or explicitly – as having aspirations and claims similar to large producers (Moruzzi Marques, 2004). The CNA, the SRB and ABAG opposed the creation of *ad hoc* measures to support family farmers mainly because they did not agree with the idea that family and business agriculture experienced different working conditions. Nevertheless, after the launch of the debate on agricultural policy which then resulted in the introduction of Pronaf, these organizations pushed for more flexible eligibility criteria for funding in order to satisfy their social base⁹.

⁷ The two ‘actor congruence networks’ can be found in the Appendix.

⁸ This dispute resulted in the creation, in 1999, of two Ministries dedicated to agricultural themes: the Ministry of Agrarian Development (*Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário*), dealing with family farming, local development and agricultural planning, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (*Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento*), focused on large farm businesses and public policies for entrepreneurship.

⁹ For example, the productivity-focused group argued that family management should be the only criterion for classifying the farms, thus excluding property size, income, and the hiring of employees. The CNA put pressure on the government to include, as an eligibility criterion, the presence of two permanent employees (which, indeed, became a rule of Pronaf), while CONTAG believed that the presence of temporary employees would have been enough (Grisa, 2012; Santos, 2011).

Figure 1. ‘Conflict network’ of the actors involved in the policy debate on Pronaf.



Note: Squares indicate the actors belonging to the productivity-focused group, circles the actors belonging to the welfare-focused group, and diamonds other actors. Political organizations are marked in blue, civil society organizations in green, and international organizations in red.

Looking at Figure 1, three political actors appear to conflict mainly with the productivity-focused group: the PP, the PMDB, and the PT. Although the intensity of their conflict is higher toward the productivity-focused group, the PP and the PMDB also disagree with a (smaller) number of views supported by the welfare-focused group. The PT, however, disagrees only with the productivity-focused group¹⁰. The PT and the PPB are the actors with the lowest level of conflict within the network, despite the former expressing an opinion on twelve topics, and the latter only on eight (Table 3). Their low levels of conflict is confirmed also by network statistics: as shown in Table 5, these parties have the same lowest value of ‘betweenness centrality’ (0.231), while the members of the productivity-focused group have the highest.

The MST obtains the highest score in Table 5 because, in addition to opposing the interests of business agriculture organizations (the CNA, ABAG and the SRB), it also dissents from CONTAG and CUT on some issues (Picolotto, 2011). Although the MST recognized the need of *ad hoc* instruments of agricultural support for family farmers, its priority was represented by the push for an agrarian reform to achieve more equitable access to land. Moreover, the group took a negative stance on technological innovation, with the complaint that some innovations are used mainly to increase profits by means of economies of scale (i.e., through land concentration), which is the logic of capitalist business agriculture. On the contrary, they supported traditional production methods and the adoption of technologies adequate for the needs of smallholders.

¹⁰ The PT conflicts with the MST on two topics on which the latter expressed disagreement, contrary to all other actors. For this reason, the MST has at least one conflict edge with every actor, i.e. it has the highest value of *betweenness centrality* (Table 5).

Table 5. ‘Betweenness centrality’ indicator (actors listed in decreasing order).

Actor	‘Betweenness centrality’	Actor	‘Betweenness centrality’
MST	8.082	PFL	0.607
CNA	7.852	FAO	0.356
ABAG	7.852	PTB	0.322
SRB	7.852	PMDB	0.322
WB	5.332	PRN	0.322
CUT	2.356	PDT	0.322
CONTAG	2.356	PPB	0.231
PP	0.607	PT	0.231

A possible explanation for the network position of the PT and the PPB relates to the topics they opposed. The PPB is the only actor that did not express a negative opinion on any topic, while the PT opposed only one topic: like most actors outside the productivity-focused group, it disagreed with the idea of giving priority to export crops over subsistence production. The larger centrality values obtained by the actors belonging either to the productivity-focused or the welfare-focused group point to their involvement in more conflict situations. Nevertheless, the members of the latter group displayed lower levels of ‘betweenness centrality’, which probably favoured the final approval of Pronaf.

Discussion

Results suggest that two conflicting coalitions (what we call the “productivity-focused group” and the “welfare-focused group”, respectively) encountered each other during the debates preceding Pronaf. Given the multiple and complex linkages among the stakeholders, including across the two groups, the final policy package must have been the result of political negotiations. To assess the relative success of each group, it is necessary to identify the elements included or excluded from the decree approved in 1996¹¹. Table 6 provides an overview of the policy outcome.

Pronaf established specific funding for raising farm incomes (goal 1), raising productivity (goal 2), stimulating the adoption of new technologies (goal 3), and aiding profit-oriented farmers (target 1), given that all actors (apart from the MST) agreed on these elements. The decree establishing Pronaf states that the actions of the programme are oriented towards ‘increasing the productive capacity [of the farms] and opening up new employment and income opportunities’, as well as ‘providing improvement of technologies [...] with a view to increasing the productivity of agricultural labour’ (article 2).

The financial sustainability of the programme (instrument 1) was not enforced, as credit was provided at a fixed interest rate (Bianchini, 2015). Evidently, Pronaf was created with a primary focus on family businesses (target 2), and the funds targeted specific productions (target 3) rather than offering single farm payments. Although the decision to support a specific category of producers managed to prevail (interest rates, payment deadlines and administrative procedures were targeted at family farms), the measures also targeted specific crops or breeding (Chaddad and Jank, 2006). Thus, although Pronaf represented an agricultural support program targeted at family farms (differently from the SNCR), it maintained an operating logic similar to the SNCR by targeting specific productions, in as much as it adopted a sectorial perspective, i.e. by product and not by farm (Grisa et al., 2014).

Interventions on land ownership (instrument 3) were not secured, given that this issue was under the jurisdiction of other programmes¹². The decision to support primarily small farms (target 4), as well as the establishment of local producer groups (institution 2), are related to the emphasis on family farms. Their introduction within Pronaf is illustrative of the ‘defeat’ of the productivity-focused group. Many stakeholders supported the development of an integrated system tying research to family farming (instrument 6), while some (i.e., family farm organizations and the FAO) were in favour of organizing farmer training activities (instrument 7). Thus, the decree establishing Pronaf had the stated goal of favouring research activities, diffusing agricultural innovation and knowledge, and ‘stimulat[ing] and

¹¹ Pronaf was established by the 1946 Decree of the President of the Republic of June 28th, 1996.

¹² Pronaf does not intervene in the subject of land ownership. This issue was handled by the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (*Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária*, INCRA) with the creation of dedicated rural settlements and the ‘market-assisted land reform’ (Heredia et al., 2013; Mendes Pereira, 2007).

enhanc[ing] the development of experiences for family farmers and their representative organizations in the areas of education, training, research and production' (article 2).

Pronaf introduced rural advisory services (institution 1) for the first time in Brazil. These institutions were organized into local (County Councils for Rural Development, *Conselhos Municipais de Desenvolvimento Rural*), state (State Council for Pronaf, *Conselho Estadual do Pronaf*), and federal boards (National Council for Pronaf, *Conselho Nacional do Pronaf*), with the participation of civil society organizations and public servants. These services aimed to serve as channels for community participation in the identification of priorities and the coordination of technical actions to promote the development of the rural environment (Ferreira and Cardoso, 2004; Vaz de Moura, 2007).

The role of the public sector emerged clearly. Indeed, the decree created public banks (institution 3), and public subsidies were preferred to private loans (instrument 8). Furthermore, the preferential support for export crops that had characterized Brazilian agricultural policy during the 60s, 70s and 80s, was not included in Pronaf in order to stimulate family farm production (which involves self-consumption and a focus on domestic markets). Nevertheless, this principle was maintained in the SNCR. Finally, three of the instruments identified at the start were not mentioned in the discussion, and, therefore, were not included in the law: tax concessions for agricultural producers (instrument 2), norms to reduce the power of informal intermediaries (instrument 4), and monitoring schemes to avoid the misuse of public funds (instrument 5). While anti-corruption measures and policy evaluation tools were (almost) never mentioned by the actors considered, the introduction of tax concessions was supported by members of the productivity-focused group. Interestingly, the PT, the least conflicting actor in the network, never mentioned these instruments.

Table 6. Final policy outcome: topics included (green), excluded (red), or not discussed (white).

Statement	Inclusion
Goal 1: increasing farm incomes/salaries	
Goal 2: increasing productivity	
Goal 3: stimulating technological innovation	
Target 1: profit-oriented farmers	
Target 2: family farmers	
Target 3: specific productions	
Target 4: small farmers	
Target 5: export productions	
Instrument 1: financial sustainability	
Instrument 2: tax concessions	
Instrument 3: fair access to land	
Instrument 4: reduce power of intermediaries	
Instrument 5: monitoring	
Instrument 6: linking farms and researchers	
Instrument 7: farmers' training	
Instrument 8: public subsidies	
Institution 1: rural advisory services	
Institution 2: producer cooperatives	
Institution 3: State agricultural banks	

The final shape of Pronaf was, thus, the outcome of negotiations between two groups diverging on several issues. The conformation of the groups is based on the polarization of Brazilian society that stems from the dualism between large-scale landowners (the CNA, ABAG and the SRB) and small producers (CONTAG, CUT and the MST) (Paulino, 2014). This cleavage was strengthened by a split in the alignment of Brazilian political parties, and by dissenting views between social movements – which were able to keep their autonomy with respect to political parties – and other organizations. In 1995, during the government of Cardoso (PSDB), most of the parties with senators belonging to the *Bancada Ruralista* (the PP, the PFL, the PMDB, the PRN, and the PTB) were part of the ruling majority (Vigna, 2007). Therefore, their conflict with the productivity-focused group may have been due to contingent political strategies rather than enduring diverging interests. This was the case with the PP and the PMDB, who were close to the agri-business.

Contrarily, the PT and the PDT expressed more affinity to the FAO's proposals and the associations supporting family farmers (although they adopted a non-conflicting stance on most issues). Overall, only one of the positions of the PT (the need for an agrarian reform) was not reflected in Pronaf. The options favoured by both the welfare-focused group and the PT were approved without the need for the latter to enter into an open conflict with the productivity-focused group.

We can thus conclude that the welfare-focused group managed to shape Pronaf in line with its political positions, although some of the issues backed by its members were not included in the final policy package, probably due to a political agreement between the PT and the influential centre-right parties or to the strong opposition from the productivity-focused group. In any case, the mobilization of the social movements representing family farmers (mainly in the framework of the Brazilian Land's Cry) was key to the approval of Pronaf, as it gave them visibility and allowed them to enter the public agenda (Bianchini, 2015; Grisa, 2014; Moruzzi Marques, 2004; Picolotto, 2011; Schneider et al., 2004).

Conclusions

The analysis of competing coalitions in political debates is becoming increasingly popular in policy studies. However, empirical findings concerning agricultural policies are lacking. Our study aimed at filling this gap by focusing on the Brazilian National Program for Strengthening Family Agriculture (Pronaf), created to provide support to family farmers at favourable rates (Petrini et al., 2016). Since the latter half of the 90s, Pronaf has been the main Brazilian public policy for family farmers in terms of resources available and population coverage (Bianchini, 2015; Grisa et al., 2014; Grisa and Schneider, 2014). We analysed the relationships that emerged in the discourse among the several actors involved in this process, as well as the actors' positions on potential changes in Brazilian agricultural policy. A prominent role was played by international organizations (the World Bank and the FAO), as is often the case in developing and emerging countries where structural reforms are shaped on their guidelines (Dixon et al., 2004). The conflict between a few large farm businesses and a multitude of small family farms, particularly significant in Brazil, was a matter of debate for the above international institutions, who were interested in promoting their own visions of Brazilian agriculture. Their partially contrasting visions were in turn used by Brazilian parties, unions and business associations to legitimize their positions on specific issues.

The brokerage role played by the PT during the negotiation of Pronaf deserves specific focus. In 2002, this party, represented by Lula, managed to win the presidential elections, courtesy of a broad alliance that included both centre and right-wing political parties (Sauer and Meszaros, 2017, 397). Despite the connections of the PT with social movements, this alliance was possible because its programme lacked elements likely to generate harsh contrast with right-wing forces, such as a redistributive agrarian reform or 'a programme of reforms to place peasant and family farming firmly at the centre of a sustainable and egalitarian model of agricultural development' (Vergara-Camus and Kay, 2017, p. 433). The PT expanded the programmes for supporting the rural poor without attempting to undermine the power of the rural *élite*. Our analysis shows that this conciliating attitude could already be observed in the mid-90s.

One of the limitations of this study lies in the small number of declarations reviewed to extract the statements of the considered actors. Given that Pronaf was created in 1996, a time when press and institutional documents were rarely digitalized, the documents available were limited. For this reason, we assumed that a given person followed the guidelines of his or her affiliated organization (e.g., a political party, a union, a business association) and thus represented the organization's position. The validity of our choice is confirmed by the fact that we found no discordant opinions in the few cases in which we had multiple individual declarations for a given organization. Another related limitation was the inability to attribute weights to the actors. We decided to consider all stakeholders to be *on par* with each other due to our focus on the political debate prior to the establishment of Pronaf. As all stakeholders had the opportunity to express their own views on the issues identified, no clear power relations could be mapped.

Although Pronaf has evolved and continues to do so since the 90s, we focus on the years of its creation. A longitudinal study would allow for a better understanding of how changes in the political discourse have been reflected in the programme since then, especially after the PT came into power in

2003. For example, rather than observing a progressive inclination to more radical stances presented by social movements like the MST, what has been noticed instead is a gradual abandonment of the provisions of Pronaf, culminating in the abolition of the Ministry of Agrarian Development after the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Further research could thus analyse the evolution of Pronaf along the years, with a focus on the changes introduced by the PT's government. This would allow for an assessment of whether there was any real attempt to pursue the goals of the organisations belonging to the welfare-focused group (the MST, CUT, and CONTAG) or whether the PT gradually dismissed their requests.

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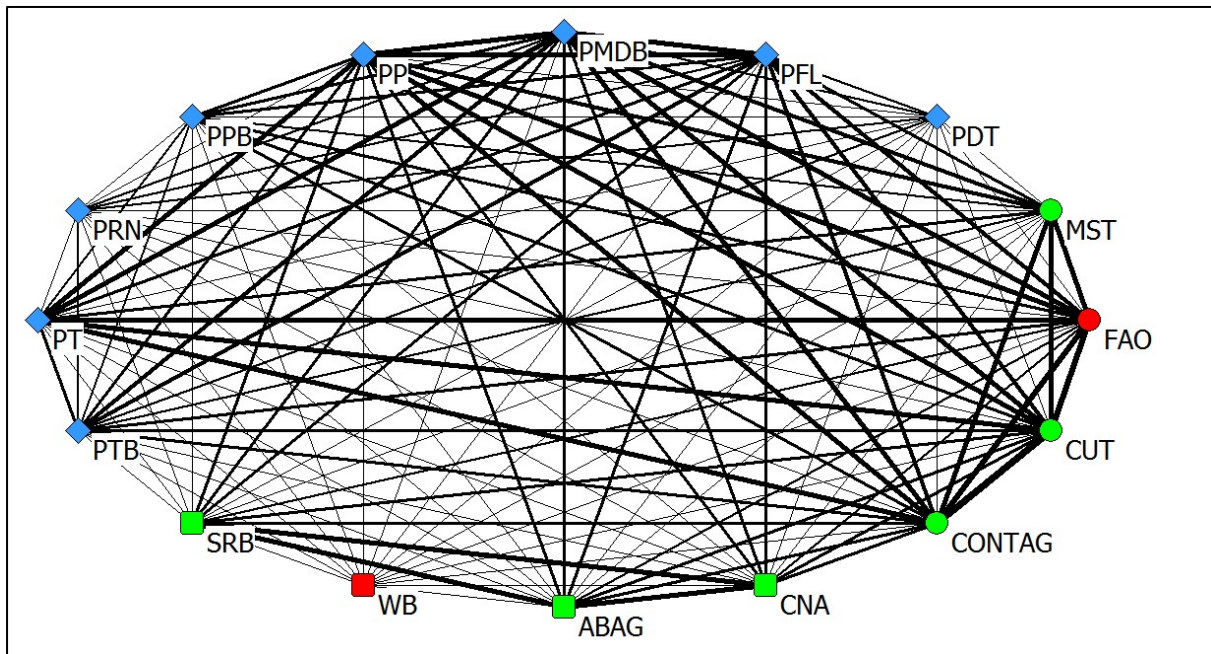
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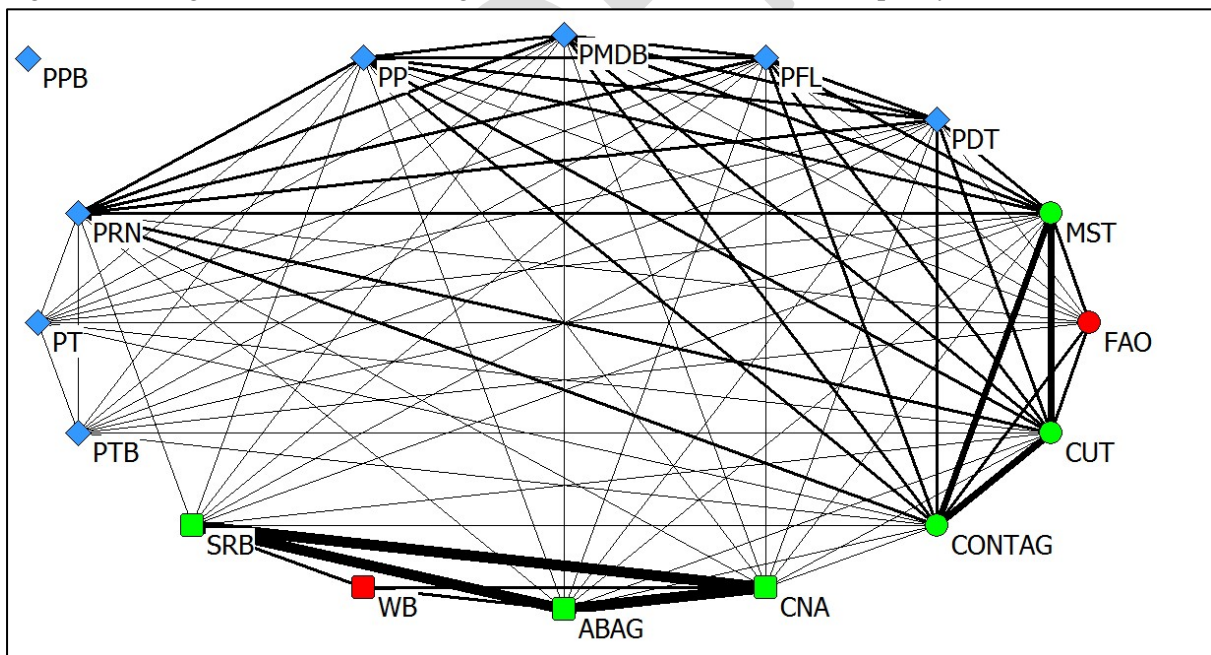
Appendix

Figure 1A. Congruence network: agreements of the actors involved in policy debate on Pronaf.



Note: See Note to Figure 1.

Figure 2A. Congruence network: not agreements of the actors involved in policy debate on Pronaf.



Note: See Note to Figure 1.